

Dear Chairman Powell and Commissioners,

As an advisor to one of the state land grant universities Golden Key International Honour Society, I have been in close contact with some of our nation's best and brightest students. a huge concern of theirs is the election process and the information available to the public on the issues of importance to them. Specifically, they are passionately concerned about their fellow youth being disengaged with the electoral process. They continue to be greatly disappointed by the lack of informative television programming.

Local public affairs programming is virtually non-existent--constituting less than one half of 1% of all local programming. More than half of news broadcasts prior to the 2002 elections did not include a single campaign story. Our democracy is at risk when many Americans don't know basic facts about the candidates or the issues, as was the case in the 2000 elections.

Since broadcasters have clearly failed in their obligation to serve the public interest, the FCC should define meaningful public interest requirements that include local civic and electoral affairs programming. At a minimum, broadcasters should air three hours per week of local civic and electoral affairs programming, with at least two hours devoted to substantive election coverage in the six weeks prior to Election Day.

As the elections approach, a well-functioning democracy demands that citizens have access to a diversity of opinions and voices on the choices confronting us.

Sincerely,

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